

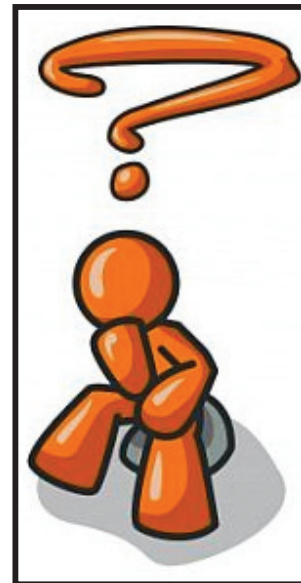
# What About ... They Know Where I Stand?

BY DR. DAVID A. DEWITT

It's an old saying, but I seem to be hearing it more lately. Of course, it can be a good thing that those around us know where we stand on significant issues. But that's not how it's being used. It's being used as an excuse for not doing anything about sin. Jesus told the following story to the chief priests and elders in the Temple:

*"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, 'I will, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you" (Matthew 21:28-31).*

The chief priests and elders could certainly say, "They know where I stand." But Jesus said *the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you*. The chief priests and elders were people who took a stand but, like the second son in the story, they did not do anything about their words.



Recently, I talked with a church elder whose adult "Christian" son became a homosexual. I asked what he intended to do about it, and he said, "Well, he knows where I stand." Not long ago, I talked to a Christian man whose "Christian" son was living with his "Christian" girlfriend. I asked him what he intended to do about it, and he said, "Well, he knows where I stand." Another "Christian" man recently told me that his "Christian" sister was divorcing her husband to marry another "Christian." I asked him what he intended to do about it, and what do you think he said? You guessed it! He said, "Well, she knows where I stand."

What these guys have said to their families is that their words mean nothing. Where they "stand" is meaningless because they will not do anything about it. Like the son in Jesus' story, they said the right thing but did not act on it. If your family knows where you stand and they also know you will not do anything about where you stand, then your stand is something you do nothing about. It is meaningless. It's just a bunch of words. You probably can't do anything about what **they** are doing, but you can do something about what **you** are doing, about what they are doing. If you do nothing, you've taught them that "where you stand" means nothing.

I recently heard someone boasting about their pastor, saying, "We have one of the only pastors I know who

takes a stand and preaches against cohabitation." Okay, so his congregation knows where he stands on cohabitation. But what is he doing about it? Is he disciplining those people? Is he telling them they are not welcome in the church if they continue to cohabit? No, he is doing nothing except telling them where he stands. In so doing, he is telling his congregation that his words mean nothing. Like the second son in Jesus' story, he says the right thing but is unwilling to do anything about what he says. His words are just a bunch of hot air. He has told his congregation that Christianity is just a religion of words, not something that anyone should actually do anything about.

Although there may be a huge difference between what we say and what we do, there is no difference whatsoever between what we do and what we believe. Jesus said, *Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit* (Matthew 12:33). James asked the question, *What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works?* (James 2:14 & 20).

Let's not voice opinions we are not willing to act on. When we do that, we tell those close to us that it's okay to do that. Then our Christianity is reduced to some pious platitudes that mean nothing. It's just a bunch of words.